

Dear Law Committee,

I am writing **in support of bill #HB5146** re: food donations from grocery stores to food pantries throughout the state. I serve as Missions Chair at the Mary Taylor Memorial United Methodist church in downtown Milford, CT. I am a member of both a city-wide food resource group in Milford and a regional food group connecting resources from Bridgeport to New Haven and beyond. I sit on the board of directors for Beth El Center, a homeless shelter in Milford. I serve meals and donate my time with food distribution in the community. This bill provides a lifeline to those experiencing food insecurity and the pantries throughout the state that support food programs.

Food insecurity affected [more than 50 million](#) Americans in 2020, an [increase of 13 million](#) since 2018. Much of this increase was due to job losses and the economic downturn resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. According to estimates from Feeding America, **more than 490,000 Connecticut residents struggle with hunger**; more than 131,000 children are food insecure. These statistics are heartbreaking, especially when we consider that much food is being wasted today that could be shared with the pantries and other food distribution sites around our state. In fact, between [30 and 40 percent](#) of all food in the United States is wasted. Eliminating food waste worldwide could feed [two billion people](#), more than double the number of individuals who are currently experiencing food insecurity and hunger.

Without the critical support from our food distribution sites, there would likely be even more residents struggling with food insecurity. Those sites rely heavily on donations because most are non-profit organizations with minimal budgets for purchases. **Therefore, having grocery stores donate excess food to local distribution sites will help mitigate both food waste and food insecurity.**

Thank you for your support of this bill.

Sincerely,  
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